

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 024391
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY S/MS:MDSHULMAN:GM
APPROVED BY S/MS:MDSHULMAN
S/S: PTARNOFF

-----093674 302225Z /62

P 302206Z JAN 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 024391

NODIS
CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: UR, US

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S DISCUSSION WITH PONOMAREV

1. FOLLOWING A JANUARY 26 LUNCHEON AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR THE SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION, THE SECRETARY HAD A TALK WITH PONOMAREV, WITH DOBRYNIN PRESENT. THE FOLLOWING POINTS WERE COVERED:

HORN:

IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION, BASED ON A CEASEFIRE AND LEADING TO NEGOTIATIONS AROUND SOME FORM OF AUTONOMY AGREEABLE TO THE PARTIES, PONOMAREV STRONGLY AFFIRMED THE INTEREST OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IN A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, AND IN A DESIRE TO WORK WITH US TO THAT END. HE REHEARSED THE SOVIET EFFORTS TO DETER THE SOMALIS FROM THEIR ATTACK, AND POINTED
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OUT HOW DISADVANTAGEOUS THAT HAD BEEN TO SOVIET INTERESTS. HE THOUGHT THE ETHIOPIANS WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT SOME FORM OF AUTONOMY FOR THE OGADEN AND ERITREA, PROVIDED THEY REMAIN WITHIN ETHIOPIA. HE ALSO CAUTIONED AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONFLICT ON DJIBOUTI, WHICH WOULD BE A FURTHER DIVISIVE FACTOR.

IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY'S REAFFIRMATION THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT SENDING ARMS TO THE SOMALIS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, PONOMAREV ASKED WHETHER THE SAUDIS OR THE IRANISANS WERE TRANSFERRING U.S. ARMS TO THE SOMALIS AND WAS TOLD WE HAD ASSURANCES FROM BOTH THAT THEY WERE NOT.

IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY'S STRONG STATEMENT OF OUR OBJECTION TO CUBAN PARTICIPATION IN THE FIGHTING, PONOMAREV GAVE THE STANDARD REPLY THAT IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR US TO TAKE THIS UP WITH THE CUBANS DIRECTLY.

IN CONCLUSION ON THIS SUBJECT, PONOMAREV THOUGHTFULLY NOTED THE SECRETARY'S SUGGESTIONS, INDICATING A FAVORABLE PERSONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM, AND PROMISED TO COMMUNICATE THEM TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND GIVE US THEIR RESPONSE.

MIDDLE EAST:

PONOMAREV INITIATED THE DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT, SAYING THAT THE MOVEMENT TOWARD A SEPARATE PEACE SEEMED TO MARK A CHANGE OF DIRECTION ON OUR PART FROM THE OCTOBER JOINT U.S.-SOVIET STATEMENT. HE SAID THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN CHAGRINED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT.

THE SECRETARY ASSURED HIM THAT SADAT HAD MADE HIS MOVE WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION (AT WHICH POINT PONOMAREV INTER-SECRET

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JECTED: "REALLY?"), AND REAFFIRMED OUR COMMITMENT TO TRY TO BUILD ON THE PRESENT SITUATION, AND MOVE IT TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT ALONG THE LINES WE HAD AGREED UPON IN THE JOINT STATEMENT.

PONOMAREV SAID THERE WERE NO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR FORMAL POSITIONS, BUT ACTUAL DEVELOPMENTS SEEMED TO BE MOVING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. HE THOUGHT THE SEPARATE TALKS WERE HAMPERING THE PROSPECTS FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE AND COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, AND WERE NOT PROVING PRODUCTIVE ANYWAY. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT WE WOULD NOW GO BACK TO THE GENEVA TRACK. IN THE COURSE OF HIS STATEMENT, WHILE HE URGED PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION, HE AFFIRMED SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO SECURITY AND TO PEACEFUL FRONTIERS AND EXPRESSED SOVIET READINESS TO JOIN IN GUARANTEES OF THOSE FRONTIERS.

2. GENERAL TONE OF CONVERSATION WAS POSITIVE THROUGHOUT, AND HIS DESIRE TO FIND COMMON GROUND ON BOTH THE HORN AND THE MIDDLE EAST WAS EVIDENT. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, PEACE, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 01/30/78
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE024391
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MDSHULMAN:GM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840148-1686, N780002-0200
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978017/aaaaafhu.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 803bfce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3783808
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECRETARY'S DISCUSSION WITH PONOMAREV
TAGS: PBOR, PDEV, UR, US, XA, XF
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/803bfce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014